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Contact: admin@a2c2.com

A2C2 Calls on eBay to Prohibit Sale of All Airbags

Group says the change is needed to reduce the availability of potentially deadly counterfeit airbags.

October 7, 2021 – The Automotive Anti-Counterfeiting Council, Inc. (A2C2), a leading voice in the fight against counterfeit automotive parts, is urging eBay to halt the sale of all supplemental restraint system (SRS) airbags and components on eBay.com, calling it the only effective way of preventing the sale of dangerous counterfeit airbags on the site.

Counterfeit airbags pose a serious threat to the health and safety of the motoring public, as they are not made to airbag manufacturers' specifications, are not subject to quality control tests or application of industry safety measures and do not abide by existing federal regulations. According to testing conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), counterfeit airbags have shown consistent malfunctions ranging from non-deployment to the expulsion of metal shrapnel during deployment.

While counterfeit airbags are typically comprised completely of counterfeit components, another variety of counterfeit airbags have been found to be comprised of certain used original equipment manufacturer (OEM) components cobbled together with counterfeit components so as to appear to be complete OEM airbags—an inflator from one vehicle may be combined with an airbag from a different vehicle, shielded by a counterfeit airbag cover.

In October 2012, NHTSA issued a consumer advisory alerting vehicle owners and repair professionals to the dangers of counterfeit airbags and their prevalence in the marketplace.¹ Since then, other federal law enforcement agencies have issued similar notices.²

“These fake airbags are notoriously difficult to spot, often appearing nearly identical to genuine, original equipment parts, but in the most tragic cases they can result in catastrophic failures with fatal consequences,”³ said A2C2 President Teena Bohi. “For this reason, A2C2 has consistently advocated for e-commerce platforms to ban the listing of all airbags and related SRS components on their sites.”



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Since its inception in 2015, A2C2 has worked to protect consumers by meeting with e-commerce marketplaces to convey the dangers of allowing the online sale of airbags and related components, while providing examples of the counterfeits for sale on those sites. A2C2 has engaged directly with eBay executives on this topic since 2017. While several e-commerce platforms have responded by enacting a broad sales prohibition of all airbags and airbag components to address the growing problem, eBay has not followed suit.

Instead, eBay continues to permit the sale of airbags on its site, which allows the sale of completely counterfeit airbags and those incorporating cobbled components, as shown in recent law enforcement investigations.⁴ Even recalled airbags have been identified for sale on eBay. This also violates eBay's own policies prohibiting the listing and sale of combustible and recalled goods, and hazardous materials that are banned by shipping providers—airbags are both combustible and banned for shipment by the U.S. Postal Service.

As with nearly all consumer products, the sale of automotive parts online has surged significantly in recent years, and with that A2C2 believes the potential for unsuspecting consumers and repair shops to purchase dangerous counterfeit automotive parts, including airbags, has increased as well. This is exemplified by the arrests and convictions of individuals found to be selling counterfeit airbags and related components on the eBay marketplace.

Our position remains that a complete sales prohibition on SRS airbags and components is the only effective solution to prevent the sale of counterfeits on eBay, and we strongly urge eBay to make this change immediately for the safety of our shared customers.

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¹ NHTSA, ICE Alert Consumers to Dangers of Counterfeit Air Bags:

<https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/nhtsa-ice-alert-consumers-dangers-counterfeit-air-bags>

² ICE HSI, Federal Partners Warn Consumers to Beware of Deadly Counterfeit Vehicle Parts Flooding the Market:

<https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/ice-hsi-federal-partners-warn-consumers-beware-deadly-counterfeit-vehicle-parts>

³ I-TEAM: Fake Airbag Filled with Black Tape, Shop Rag Found in Deadly Crash, CBS-DFW11:

<https://dfw.cbslocal.com/2019/02/25/fake-airbag-filled-black-tape-shop-rag-deadly-crash/>

⁴ Cheektowaga Man Sentenced for Buying and Selling Counterfeit Airbags:

<https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdny/pr/cheektowaga-man-sentenced-buying-and-selling-counterfeit-airbags>

About A2C2

Formed in 2015, the Automotive Anti-Counterfeiting Council, Inc. (A2C2), is a non-profit association comprised of members from Daimler IP, Ford, General Motors, Honda, Hyundai, Kia, Nissan, Stellantis, Subaru, Toyota, Volkswagen Group of America, and their subsidiary brands. Our mission is collaboration among automakers and their partners that strives to eliminate counterfeit automotive components that could harm U.S. consumers. A2C2 is a platform for member companies to collaborate with federal and state authorities in response to increasing trends in automotive counterfeiting. Visit a2c2.com for more information.



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